

Four Decades of Vital Jewish Discourse

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A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

If you subscribe to our [newsletter](#), then you already know that the journal *Sh'ma* and BJPA have recently officially launched the complete collection of the journal, from its inception in 1970 until the latest issue. [Read the press release here.](#)

This collection has already become a crucial part of BJPA's overall holdings -- not only in size (*Sh'ma* articles currently make up over a third of BJPA publications), but also in broadening the scope of the archive. A bird's-eye view of the context of *Sh'ma* within our other holdings will help to explain:

Our other largest single content contributor, the [Journal of Jewish Communal Service](#) (with its predecessors, Jewish Social Service Quarterly and the Bulletin of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service) is professionally oriented, and for much of its history, focuses mainly on social work. Many other of our publications are studies, reports, surveys, and other research-oriented publications. (For a few recent examples, see [Limud by the Lake Revisited](#) or [Child Poverty and Deprivation in the British Jewish Community](#).) Also common among BJPA publications are professional analyses and recommendations. (For example, see this [AJC Statement on Religious Pluralism](#), or [Celebrating Distinctions: A Strategic Plan for the LGBT Alliance](#).)

Each of these types of publication (and more) provides a different kind of perspective on topics of Jewish policy. One element that makes *Sh'ma* unique among these sources, however -- and one reason that this launch is so significant -- is that *Sh'ma* is a platform for such a diverse range of approaches. Academic research is important, but so are the free-wheeling commentaries on traditional texts in *Sh'ma*'s [NiSh'ma](#) series. Professional best practices and social work methodologies are important, but so are the more informal reactions of influential Jewish leaders and authors to the pressing issues of the day. Detailed analyses and recommendations are important, but so are the dynamic and multi-voiced debates presented in the pages of any given issue of *Sh'ma* on any given topic.

Additionally, and not unimportantly, *Sh'ma* is reader-oriented and accessible. To be sure, the journal is policy-relevant and substantive, but it is also accessible to the general reader in a way which some of our other material is not. This is not an insult to that less accessible material; professional literature and social science demand a high level of detail. But as we officially launch the complete *Sh'ma* collection, it's

important to recognize that emphasizing strong writing (as *Sh'ma* consistently does) can also be a powerful policy tool.